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49. (Amended) The stent assembly of claim 53 wherein the second end cover section is disposed under undulations of the second ring section and on underlying portions of the second ring section.

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50. (Amended) The stent assembly of claim 53 wherein a plurality of ring connectors extend between the first ring section to an adjacent intermediate ring section.

51. (Amended) The stent assembly of claim 53 wherein a plurality of ring connectors extend between the second ring section and an adjacent intermediate ring section.

REMARKS

Response to Election Requirements

In the aforesaid Office Action the Examiner required an election between the species of Figs. 1-7, the species of Figs. 8-10, the species of Figs. 11-13, the species of Figs. 14 and 16 and species of Fig. 15. As indicated in the Office Action applicants' counsel provisionally elected to prosecute the species of Figs. 1-7. However, based upon the above claim amendments, applicants believe that the broadest claims 52 and 53 read on both the species of Figs. 1-7 and the species of Figs. 8-10. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider the election requirement and to examine both species. Claims 52 and 53 are generic to and read on both species. Claims 1-28 read on the species of Figs. 1-7 in the event that the Examiner is unwilling to withdraw the prior election requirement.

Response to Rejections Under 35 USC §102 and 103(a)

Claims 1-10, 13-15 and 21 are rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by Chevillon et al. (6,248,116). However, as amended these

claims require the connector and the connecting means to be integral with the tubular stent body and to extend over a portion of the stent cover and thereby secure the stent cover to the tubular stent body. Chevillon et al. fails to teach the feature of the connector and connecting means to be integral with the tubular stent body.

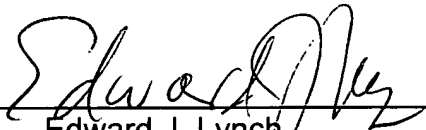
Claims 1-28 were also rejected by the Examiner under under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Friedberg (6,254,627) in view of Khosravi et al. (6,325,820) further in view of Chevillon et al. '116. However, Friedberg secures the cover to the stent body by sutures and therefore does not make suggest a connector or connecting means which is integral with the tubular stent body. The secondary references Khosravi et al. and Chevillon et al. fail to make up for the deficiencies of the primary reference.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants wish to bring to the attention of the Patent Office the references listed on the attached PTO-1449 form and request that they be considered by the Examiner. A copy of each reference cited on the attached form is enclosed herewith.

Applicants believe that the pending claims define patentable subject matter and respectfully request reconsideration and an early allowance thereof.

Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED-UP VERSION TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Please amend claims 1- 10, 12-15 and 48-51 to read as follows:

1. (Amended) [A] The stent of claim 52 wherein the[, comprising:
 - a) an expandable tubular body having a first end and a second end;and
 - b)] at least one cover connector [on] integral with the tubular body [having] has a first end, a second end, a first section adjacent the first end of the connector, a second section adjacent the second end of the connector, and a third section between the first and second sections, and having an open configuration, and a closed configuration in which the first section has at least one bend and the second section has at least one bend so that the first and second sections are bent together and are directed towards the third section.
2. (Amended) The stent of claim 1 wherein the cover connector has portions configured to bend when the cover connector assumes the closed configuration.
3. (Amended) The stent of claim 1 wherein the cover connector assumes the closed configuration when the first section is bent at a first location, and the second section is bent at a first location on the second section.
4. (Amended) The stent of claim 1 wherein the cover connector assumes the closed configuration when the first section has a first bend and a second bend in the same direction as the first bend in the first section, and the second section has a first bend and a second bend in the same direction as the second bend in the second section.

5. (Amended) The stent of claim 4 wherein the second bend on the first section is between the first bend on the first section and the first end of the cover connector, and the second bend on the second section is between the first bend on the second section and the second end of the cover connector.

6. (Amended) The stent of claim 4 wherein the second bend on the first section is between the first bend on the first section and the third section of the cover connector, and the second bend on the second section is between the first bend on the second section and the third section of the cover connector.

7. (Amended) The stent of claim 1 wherein the first end and the second end of the cover connector are configured to pierce a stent cover.

8. (Amended) The stent of claim 7 wherein the first end and the second end of the cover connector are tapered to a pointed tip.

9. (Amended) The stent of claim 1 wherein the tubular body has spaced apart wall sections defining an open-walled structure, and the cover connector is secured to a support member extending between the spaced apart wall sections.

10. (Amended) The stent of claim 9 wherein the support member has a first end secured to the tubular body and a second end secured to the tubular body, and the third section of the cover connector is secured to the support member between the first and second ends of the support member.

12. (Amended) The stent of claim 1 wherein the cover connector is about 0.15 mm to about 10 mm in length.

13. (Amended) The stent of claim 1 wherein the cover connector is substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the tubular body in the open configuration.

14. (Amended) The stent of claim 1 wherein the cover connector is substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of the tubular body in the open configuration.

15. (Amended) [A] The stent assembly of claim 53 wherein], comprising:

a) an expandable tubular body, and] the at least one cover connector on the tubular body [having] has a first end, a second end, a first section adjacent the first end of the connector, a second section adjacent the second end of the connector, and a third section between the first and second sections, and having an open configuration, and a closed configuration in which the first section has at least one bend and the second section has at least one bend so that the first and second sections are bent together and are directed towards the third section; and

[b) a cover having a first end and a second end, and] wherein at least a portion of the first section and the second section of the cover connector integral with the tubular stent body extend [through] over a portion of the cover to secure the cover to the tubular stent body stent.

48. (Amended) [A] The stent assembly of claim 53 wherein], comprising:

a. a] at least the first ring section of the tubular stent body [having] has [an expandable tubular body formed of a plurality of ring sections having] undulations [with a first ring section at one end of the tubular body, a second ring section at another end of the tubular body, at least one additional ring section

between the first and the second ring sections] and at least one ring connecting member extending between [each] the first ring section and an adjacent ring section]; and

b. a stent cover disposed in part about the stent having a first end cover section under undulations of the first ring section of the stent and on the exterior of the connecting member between the first ring section and an adjacent ring section, a second end cover section and an intermediate cover section between the first and second end cover sections].

49. (Amended) The stent assembly of claim [48] 53 wherein the second end cover section is [between] disposed under undulations of the second ring section and on underlying portions of the second ring section.

50. (Amended) The stent assembly of claim [[48] 53 wherein a plurality of ring connectors extend between the first ring section to an adjacent intermediate ring section.

51. (Amended) The stent assembly of claim [48] 53 wherein a plurality of ring connectors extend between the second ring section and an adjacent intermediate ring section.